



Westside Wire

JOE WALKER MIDDLE SCHOOL:
Congressman Buck McKeon talks with
history students about current issues



Congressman McKeon Visits Westside at Student Request

Students of Joe Walker Middle School had the honor of a personal visit from Congressman Buck McKeon of the 25th United States Congressional District. The congressman visited 8th grade history students at the school to answer their questions about current issues. This visit came as the result of their teacher's request that students write a letter to one of their representatives at a federal, state or local level.

Many students chose to fulfill their history class assignment by writing letters to Congressman McKeon.

During the course of their history class this year, students discussed current issues and the candidates running for various seats in office. "One of the things the students said to me was that they didn't believe they had a voice," said Willie Scott, history teacher at Joe Walker Middle School. "The

congressman coming today, I believe, gave these students the true realization that they do have a voice."

McKeon answered student questions about many issues from gun control to sequestration and welfare to the national debt. His overall message to students, however, was that they are the future of this country and they must get their education to ensure America's future.

"If there is one thing you remember from my visit here today, it's that America needs you," McKeon told the group of history students. "You're going to be the future leaders of this country."

Several students were specifically selected to take the microphone, stand next to McKeon and directly ask him their question, which he answered for the benefit of the entire assembly. McKeon said he was

impressed by the quality and depth of the questions coming from such young citizens.

"It's inspiring when you think that they're eighth-graders and they've got enough understanding of what's going on in the country to be able to ask those kinds of questions," said McKeon. "Very, very good. It makes you feel better about our future."

"I thought the congressman answered them very, very well," said Bowen Colby, an 8th grade student who asked McKeon what he was doing to stop sequestration.

"At Westside, it is important to us that we build community-minded citizens to ensure the future of the Antelope Valley is in good hands," said Westside Union School District Superintendent Regina Rossall. "It was an honor to have Congressman Buck McKeon help our students realize how vital they are to the future of their country."

April/May
2013

Serving nearly 9,000 students spread across 346 square miles, Westside Union School District prides itself on being "the district of choice" with more choice-based programs than any other district in the Antelope Valley. With the opening of the Gregg Anderson Academy, there are now 12 schools in the district providing world-class education to students from kindergarten to 8th grade. Continuing a tradition of high academic achievement, Westside Union School District was the only district in the Antelope Valley to see all of its schools exceed the coveted 800 score on the Academic Performance Index administered by the California Department of Education.



Joe Walker Accepting Applications for STEALTH Academy

Joe Walker STEALTH Academy recently held a Community Open House to showcase their innovative educational programs to local families and launch the application process for the 2013-14 school year. Joe Walker's STEALTH Academy provides curriculum with a comprehensive focus on science, technology, engineering and learning through humanities (STEALTH). Parents in the Antelope Valley desiring to provide their children with opportunities to prepare for careers in science, engineering and related fields are encouraged to apply to this program.

These rigorous academic programs are available to all 7th and 8th grade students in the Antelope Valley and parents must apply for an opportunity to have their student join the program. Applications are being accepted through Friday, April 26 at 3:00pm.

"STEALTH is about creating opportunities for our student to lead the Antelope Valley in the future," said Joe Walker principal Christina Fitzgerald. "The STEALTH program has a strong focus on engineering and technology, but also combines art and humanities in order to develop well-rounded

individuals."

Students accepted to the STEALTH Academy will be able to take part in extra-curricular classes including Civil Air Patrol, Pre-AP, GATE, robotics, art, drama, music and much more.

"STEALTH is everything we do at Joe Walker," said 7th grade robotics student Angelina Ensley as she answered parent and student questions at the Community Open House. "I love coming here." Angelina is still considering a career in engineering, but says she thoroughly enjoys all she learns in her robotics classes.

"The STEALTH Academy is a perfect example of our commitment to excellence at Westside Union School District," said Superintendent Regina Rossall. "The combination of STEM and humanities at Joe Walker provides opportunities for students to better prepare for future careers in the Antelope Valley's leading industries."

For more information about Joe Walker's STEALTH Academy applications, call the school at (661) 943-3258.

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Westside Celebrates Read Across America



Mayor Ledford Joins Gregg Anderson Academy Students in Celebrating Read Across America Day

At the beginning of March, students all over the country celebrate the birthday of Dr. Seuss with Read Across America Week. Gregg Anderson Academy was honored to welcome guest reader, Mayor Jim Ledford to the school in celebration of this special week of reading. The mayor of Palmdale read several Dr. Seuss books to the students and discussed with them the importance of reading often and reading well.

"I have lots of books in my office," Ledford said when asked by a student how many books he had. "I couldn't do my job if I wasn't a good reader."

Ledford encouraged students to increase their imagination by choosing books over movies or television.

"Reading is so important because it unlocks your imagination," he said. "You can watch a movie on TV, and that will entertain you, but it won't entertain your imagination like a book will. That's when you really start to grow."

Mayor Ledford also held a question and answer period in which he answered student questions ranging from what his office looked like to why it is so important to read books. Ledford's ultimate message to students was that reading and education are vital to living a happy life. He told students getting their education would lead to finding a job they enjoy.

"If you love what you do, it's not work. You like it," Ledford advised. "When you get older you want to pretend like you're playing when you work and when you love what you do, you're actually playing and getting paid."

"Westside was privileged to welcome Mayor Ledford to Gregg Anderson," said Westside Union School District Superintendent Regina Rossall. "We enjoy partnering with local officials to broaden the minds of our students and help them become more community-minded. We also join Mayor Ledford in encouraging students to read often and read well so they can live happier lives and find a career they love."

A Message from the Superintendent

I hope that you and your children enjoyed a wonderful spring break, but we were pleased to have our students return to school last week! As we enter the last quarter of our school year, there will be many activities at each of our school sites, and we hope you will find time to be active participants in all of them.

During this month, all of our 2nd-8th grade students will be participating in the annual state testing program, STAR. The testing window opens during the end of the month, and all schools will be administering the test. As you know this test helps to determine grade level standards met by our students, and provides the API scores for our schools. As with every day at school, we hope the children will arrive on time, well rested, having had a healthy breakfast, and be ready to do their best work. If you have questions about the schedule for the school of your children, please contact the teacher or principal. Our students have done well on these tests since they became part of our educational programs, and we are sure they will show their high levels of academic success again this year.

WAVE, the education foundation that supports our schools, is having two upcoming events. On April 10th a Dine Out Night will be held at the local McDonald's Restaurants on Avenue N at 50th Street West and Avenue L at 30th Street West. A portion of the proceeds from the night will be returned to WAVE for funding

various school programs. Beginning April 8th - April 23rd our schools will be participating in a food drive in conjunction with Keller Williams. The goal is to donate 20,000 cans or boxes of non-perishable food to help stock the pantries at Grace Resources and SAVES. In addition a 5K walk will be held at the AV Mall on May 4th with some of the funds raised being donated to WAVE for school projects. Please join WAVE in supporting these events as WAVE is working diligently to support our extra-curricular sports and other projects at the school, a children's musical theater group, music, and many more activities.

With continuing concern for school safety, our sites have continued with routine drills so that students are prepared in cases of emergencies. We are also updating our supplies and equipment at the schools, as well as working with local Sheriff, Fire and City staffs to coordinate our safety efforts. It is still critical for all of us to be vigilant in reporting suspicious individuals or events to our school administrators or teachers. Safety is all of our concerns, and our children depend on us all to keep them safe.

This month the Board of Trustees will take pride in recognizing our PTA Presidents and our volunteers of the year from each school. Thanks to all of you who help at our schools and in our District. Your dedication makes a great difference for our students.

The open window for submitting transfer requests will be April 15th to May 15th at 3:30 p.m. Forms can be obtained from your district office. Transfers must be submitted to the District Office.

Westside Round-Up

Anaverde

On Friday, April 12 Anaverde Hills will hold The Ugly Duckling Assembly at the school for Kindergarten through 3rd grade. This assembly is made possible by the Antelope Valley College Theater Department and will focus on teaching children the dangers of name calling and bullying.

Esperanza

In early March, classes at Esperanza will be focusing on reading to recognize and celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday. "Read Across America" day also coincides with this and various community members and parents are invited to read to different classes. Check Facebook for more information as the month of March approaches.

Joe Walker

Joe Walker STEALTH Academy Community Open House will be held at the school on March 14 at 5:00pm. This open house is a showcase of the programs provided at Joe Walker. Students will attend and participate in performances including band, drama, cheer, VEX Robotics and much more. The entire community is invited to attend.

Quartz Hill

The Quartz Hill PTA is sponsoring a Reflections program. This is an opportunity for students to submit artwork, photography, music, dance routines, etc. for consideration. Winners go to the next level of competition and have an opportunity to foster their skills.

Cottonwood

Love is in the air for Cottonwood families. The Cottonwood PTA Sweetheart's Dance will be held at the school on Friday, February 22 at 6:00pm. This is a father/daughter and mother/son event that provides fun for the whole family.

Gregg Anderson

Gregg Anderson Academy began Fine Arts Fridays in the month of January. This is held one Friday each month for the 4th grade students. For these special fine arts study days, curriculum includes: drawing, French, graphic arts and water colors. Check Facebook periodically for photos of 4th graders participating in Fine Arts Fridays!

Leona Valley

On March 8, Leona Valley 7th and 8th grade students will take a field trip to the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles where they will learn more about the Holocaust. Leona Valley students are grateful to the Lancaster West Rotary Club for the funding of this exciting, educational trip.

Sundown

Sundown's Dancing Feet have been practicing hard for the Dancing Feet Flapjack Breakfast fundraisers held on February 2 and February 9. A photo of Sundown students in rehearsal was featured in the AV Press on January 31. Great work, Sundown students!

Del Sur

The Del Sur Winter Formal Dance was held on campus Friday, February 8. This dance was open to all 7th and 8th graders to have fun dancing with friends and enjoy delicious refreshments. Thanks to all those who participated and helped make this a great event for Del Sur students.

Hillview

Hillview Middle School is preparing for their Parent Information Night on April 17 at 6:00pm. This meeting will provide information about the 6th grade honors classes, application process, eligibility and extra-curricular activities. Parents of interested Westside students are welcome to attend and learn more.

Rancho Vista

Rancho Vista Elementary will hold their First Annual Spring Benefit Auction on Saturday, April 13 at Rancho Vista Golf Club. The event is \$20 per ticket, which includes dinner and door raffle prize drawings. Auction items include Disneyland tickets, JetHawks tickets and much more! All proceeds go to the school for programs and supplies.

Valley View

The focus of Valley View continues to be student achievement and success. As such, this school will continue its FIT Intervention/Enrichment program which will focus on helping students achieve their full learning potential.